

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An engine control unit for a vehicle including an ignition switch for an engine, a specific electric device and another electric device, the engine control unit comprising:

normal control means for performing an engine control with an operating power supplied in response to a turn-on of the ignition switch;

specific control means for performing a specific control other than the engine control with an operating power supplied in response to a specific power supply condition other than the turn-on of the ignition switch, the specific control using the specific electric device but not the another electric device; and

inhibit means for inhibiting the another electric device from operating, when the specific control means operates in response to the specific power supply condition.

2. The engine control unit according to Claim 1, wherein the specific electric device and the another electric device are a specific electric load and another electric load, respectively, and the inhibit means cuts off a supply of the operating power to the another electric load to inhibit the another electric load from operating.

3. The engine control according to Claim 1, wherein the specific electric device and the another electric device are a specific electric circuit and another electric circuit, respectively.

4. The engine control unit according to Claim 3, wherein the inhibit means cuts off a supply of the operating power to the another circuit to inhibit the another circuit from operating.

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5. An engine control unit for a vehicle including an ignition switch for an engine, a specific electric device and another electric device, the engine control unit comprising:

10 a microcomputer programmed to perform an engine control with an operating power supplied in response to a turn-on of the ignition switch and to perform a specific control other than the engine control with an operating power supplied in response to a specific power supply condition other than the turn-on of the ignition switch, the specific control using the specific electric device but not
15 the another electric device,

wherein the microcomputer is programmed to check whether a present supply of the operating power is in response to the specific power supply condition each time the operating power is supplied, and to inhibit the another electric device from operating when
20 the present supply of the operating power is in response to the specific power supply condition, thereby performing the specific control.

6. The engine control unit according to Claim 1, wherein the
25 another electric device includes an electric load which becomes operable when the ignition switch is turned on.

7. The engine control unit according to Claim 1, wherein the another electric device includes an electric load which is required to be driven before the engine or a transmission of the vehicle starts operation.

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8. The engine control unit according to Claim 3, wherein the another electric circuit is for rendering operative an electric load which becomes operable when the ignition switch is turned on.

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9. The engine control unit according to Claim 8, wherein the another electric circuit is for controlling an electric load which is required to be driven before the engine or a transmission of the vehicle starts operation.

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10. The engine control unit according to Claim 5, wherein the another electric device includes an electric load which becomes operable when the ignition switch is turned on.

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11. The engine control unit according to Claim 5, wherein the another electric device includes an electric load which is required to be driven before the engine or a transmission of the vehicle starts operation.

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12. The engine control unit according to Claim 1, further comprising:

timer means for detecting that a predetermined time has

passed after the normal control means stops operating with a turn-off of the ignition switch,

wherein the specific power supply condition includes a detection of a lapse of the predetermined time by the timer means.

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13. The engine control unit according to Claim 1, further comprising:

communication means for communicating with an external device,

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wherein the specific power supply condition includes a reception of a signal from the external device by the communication means.

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14. The engine control unit according to Claim 13, wherein the specific control includes a process of diagnosing a specific part of the vehicle, and the communication means transmits a diagnostic result of the normal control means to the external device.

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15. The engine control unit according to Claim 13, wherein the communication means is for performing radio communication with the external device.

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16. The engine control unit according to Claim 1, wherein the specific control includes a process of diagnosing an evaporation gas purge system of the vehicle.